courier agencies more than a month after they are signed by the concerned ITOs;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there are any orders/directions that such refund orders be issued at the earliest;

(d) if so, the details thereof and why such instructions are not followed; and

(e) whether any action is taken against those responsible for causing such delay, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir. The refunds are issued and dispatched through post offices within one month from the date of signing by the Assessing Officer. However, refunds pertaining to the jurisdiction of Commissioners of Income Tax, Delhi-IX, XIV, XV and XVI are issued directly by State Bank of India under Refund Banker Scheme.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As per the instructions, the refunds are to be issued within four months from the date of receipt of return and dispatched within 30 days from the date of signing. However, in some cases the instructions could not be followed due to reasons attributable to assessees like—

(i) Non-quoting or wrong quoting of PAN number by the assessee.

(ii) Non-furnishing of bank account details by the assessee.

(iii) Pending de-duplication of PAN.

(e) Does not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Rehabilitation package for farmers

4372. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have worked out any rehabilitation package including interest waiver on loans for farmers during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of beneficiaries, State-wise, especially in Andhra Pradesh; and

(d) the amount allocated and released so far especially in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) The Farm Credit Package announced by Government on 18.06.2004 for doubling the flow of agricultural credit, *inter-alia,* includes debt relief to farmers by way of reschedulement of loans with a moratorium period and "One Time Settlement Scheme" for small and marginal farmers. The farmers availing the benefit of the debt relief became eligible for fresh loans from the banks.

Further, in 31 debt stressed districts in the four states of Maharashtra (06), Andhra Pradesh (16), Karnataka (06) and Kerala (03), the relief package was announced for farmers by the Government. It provides for waiver of the entire interest on overdue loans as on 01.07.2006 such that all farmers will have no past interest burden as on that date. It also provides for reschedulement of the overdue loans of the farmers as on 01.07.2006 over a period of 3-5 years with a one year moratorium.

(c) and (d) The Government has released Rs. 1359.13 crore as its 50% share towards interest waiver for 31 districts of which Rs. 718.22 crore is for Andhra Pradesh towards share for waiver of interest on overdue loans for debt stressed farmers. The number of beneficiaries of the scheme is not available. However, against the target to waive Rs. 1436.44 crore of overdue interest in Andhra Pradesh, Rs. 1962.98 crore of overdue interest has been waived off.

New Income Tax Return Forms

4373. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has announced new Income Tax Return Forms for the year 2007-08;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the form 2F being used now will be removed;